

MINUTES
OWATONNA HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING on NOVEMBER 27, 2023

The regular meeting of the Owatonna Housing and Redevelopment Authority was called to order at 4:04 p.m. in the 2nd Floor Conference Room by Vice Chairperson Hole.

Members present were Nathan Dotson, Julie Fiske, John Hole. Also present were Executive Director Troy Klecker, Housing Manager Ghassan Madkour and Administrative Technician Kristen Kopp.

Approval of the Minutes: Chairperson Olivo called for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 23, 2023 meeting. A motion was made by Dotson and seconded by Fiske to approve the minutes. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

Executive Director's Report: Troy Klecker gave an update on housing projects. He said the apartments on 26th Street and Cedar Avenue North are open. Some units may not be open yet, but they are pretty close to being open. Westlake Meadows apartments are progressing. Each of the five buildings are at a different stage. The first one should be opening up as soon as January and they will open in phases throughout the next couple of years. The other apartment project, Ascend, is a mixed-use project. They're moving along well and are planning to be done around this time next year. There are two projects we're working on now: the redevelopment of Modern Aire Apartments, which will be 60 units, 20 of which are affordable, and Eastgate II, which is a tax credit project very similar to Eastgate. We were not awarded tax credits, but will be reapplying in June. These projects take a long time, especially the affordable ones. The City owns a lot on the corner of 3rd Avenue NW and 22nd Street NW. We're trying to get the title work cleared up so we can plat it. That was land that was given to the City for affordable housing by the Cashmans. There is a lot behind Fareway Foods on Cedar Avenue South that's getting some interest as well. All the approvals are in place for Mineral Springs Estates up by the waterpark. They were hoping to get started this fall, but the costs related to infrastructure is too high to move forward, as that affects the lot prices. They're looking at equity investors and hoping to move forward in the spring. We've had a couple of local developers asking what they need to do for a single-family development. That is very encouraging that they're starting to ask questions. The good news is we're getting a good number of apartments and we're at 21 houses. Last year we had 16 houses, so that is encouraging.

Old Business: The Housing Choice Voucher program monthly report was presented by Madkour, including the City of Owatonna monthly balance sheet and revenue/expense report. Program utilization: The Housing Voucher program for October totaled 100. Total year to date assistance and administration costs were \$696,665.79 and revenues were \$747,581.01. The Housing Choice Voucher Program fund balance at September month end is \$84,656.83. The HRA Revenues year to date total is \$489,079.77 and the expenses total \$448,453.45. The HRA General Fund balance is \$561,982.74.

He said by the end of this month, we should be hitting 100. Mainstream is back over 30. Bridges is currently at 37 for regular Bridges and 7 for Bridges Like. Quite a bit of waitlist applications are coming in lately—the list is over 200. It's a constant thing that people don't respond. He said he's considering giving them a month instead of two weeks, but it already takes a long time to get someone on board after they have an application. To put it out another two weeks adds another two weeks to fill the voucher. It takes the sense of urgency out. Klecker says it leaves those on the waiting list there longer. Dotson agreed. The Commissioners agreed to keep it at two weeks. Klecker said they can gauge the need based on how quickly they act. He said they coordinate with the police department. The Police Department have a list of addresses, so if anything happens, we get notified. If it rises to a level that violates the voucher, we take action. Dotson asked how much notice we give. Klecker said someone could be charged and not be guilty, but we watch it. Madkour said to be customer oriented, we usually give them an extra month, so 60 days, if the charge is set in stone.

A motion was made by Dotson and seconded by Fiske to approve the reports as presented. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried.

New Business: Madkour said he's working with a couple of agencies to see if we can absorb the vouchers. He said he'd rather fill it with our people. He said he wants to keep the numbers where they need to be. Klecker said he's on the Affordable Housing Task Force through United Way. It's a group of people who want to see more affordable housing, although it's not really clear what role the group can play. There is something this group can do, and that is that we have a Community Affordable Housing Action Plan. He said to let him know if they have any ideas of what this group can do.

Other: Madkour said that the December meeting falls on Christmas Day. Klecker said we could just cancel the meeting in December. Madkour said it will slow down quite a bit. Dotson asked if we have to have a special meeting, how much notice do we need? Madkour said at least a week. We're planning to be in the new building next meeting.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Dotson and seconded by Fiske. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ghassan Madkour
Housing Manager